

Akron City

October-December 2008

Special Section: The Akron Scholarship Plan

Neighborhoods: Gatherings Show
Community's Strength

What's the 3-1-1? Questions for
the Mayor

One Generation
Prepares the
Next Generation
for the Future



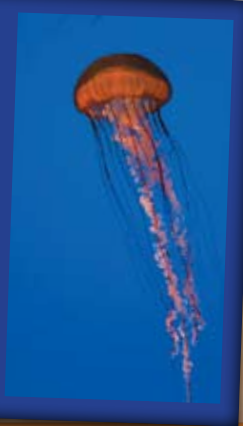
Akron Happenings

Upcoming events
for everyone!

Now through year's end "Jellies: Rhythm in the Blue"

Come within inches of seven different species of vibrant and intriguing jellyfish. This new exhibit includes 10 aquariums, making it the largest collection of jellyfish in the state of Ohio.

www.akronzoo.org



Oct. 3-4

Firefighters Combat Challenge

Firefighters compete from around the U.S. for a spot in the national championships. FREE. Opening Ceremonies, 6:30pm Friday, Competition, 10:30am Saturday



Thursday, Oct. 9

Akron Fire Memorial to fallen heroes

11am,
Station 4 on
Thornton
Avenue at
South Main
Street



Saturday, Oct. 11

Ellet Community Fall Festival

11am - 5pm,
Ellet Community Center



Oct. 17 - 31

Boo at the Zoo

Dress your little ghosts and goblins in their Halloween costumes and trick-or-treat at 12 different themed stations. Tickets available at the Zoo or Acme Fresh Markets.
www.akronzoo.org



Nov. 5 - Jan. 3

"All Shook Up" Carousel Dinner Theater

Heat up the season with this sizzling, energetic musical told through more than 24 of the greatest Elvis Presley songs.
www.carouseldinnertheatre.com

Friday, Nov. 28

Holiday Lighting Ceremony

Akron's downtown lights up the night, featuring the city's official Christmas Tree.

Main Street between Bowery and State.

6:30pm. FREE parking. FREE admission. www.lock3live.com

Nov. 28 - Dec. 31

The 5th Annual Chriskindl Market

America's most authentic European Christmas Market at Lock 3. FREE.

Ohio's largest seasonal ice rink open Nov. 21 - Feb 1.
Rental \$2. Admission FREE. www.lock3live.com



Saturday, Nov. 29

Welcome Santa Parade

Noon. Dozens of parade units welcome the man in the red suit in this annual FREE event. Main Street, between Cedar and Bowery. Free parking.

Nov. 29 - Dec. 7

"The Nutcracker"

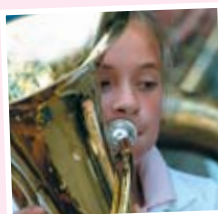
Timeless classic voted Akron's #1 holiday show. Akron Civic Theatre featuring Ballet Theater of Ohio.
www.akroncivic.com



Sunday, Dec. 14

Tuba Christmas.

Akron's beloved holiday tradition returns for its 29th year conducted by founder Tucker Jolly. 4pm and 6:30pm.
www.ejthom-ashall.com



Wednesday, Dec. 31

First Night

Join thousands of your best friends in Downtown Akron as the calendar flips to 2009. A celebration of the visual and performing arts, with the area's best fireworks at midnight. Sponsored by Downtown Akron Partnership.
www.downtownakron.com

Akron City is produced three times a year. The magazine and recycling calendar are distributed by U.S. Mail to all residents of Akron by Keep Akron Beautiful, a not-for-profit corporation in the state of Ohio, Paula Davis, President and CEO.

Additional copies of the magazine and recycling calendar are available through: Keep Akron Beautiful
850 E. Market Street
330-375-2116
e-mail: KeepAkronBeautiful@ci.akron.oh.us

Tell us what you think by replying to editor@ci.akron.oh.us

Or share your thoughts with the mayor at mayor@ci.akron.oh.us

Publication services provided by LPC Publishing Company.

Editor
Dave Lieberth

Photographer
Bruce Ford

Contributing Photographers
Ken Love
Sefanik Photography

Design
Blink Concept & Design, Inc.

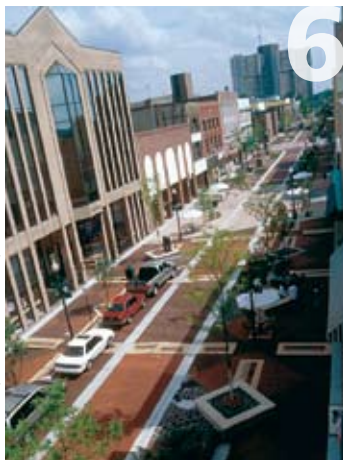
Contributors
Michael Cohill
Dave Lieberth
Bob Sberna
Billy Soule



Contents

Akron CITY Magazine October-December 2008

Photo courtesy of Kalamazoo County Convention & Visitors Bureau (KCCVB)



FEATURE STORY

6 The Akron Scholarship Plan

College, trade or technical school tuition and expenses will be paid for Akron resident high school graduates.

What Happened in Kalamazoo?

Kalamazoo's experience bodes well for Akron's Plan for the 21st Century.

On Our Cover



ON OUR COVER is Bruce Ford's photo of the old and the new: historic Elizabeth Park Valley, the site of the brand new Cascade Village. **Models:** Suzie, Aaron, Max and Zoe Graham; Elizabeth and Claire Sheeler and Mark Moore



DEPARTMENTS

NEIGHBORHOODS

Goodyear Heights

4 Crime prevention gathering features dedication of new mural & family activities

Neighbors Day Akron

4 1500 residents participate in this year's event

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROPOSAL

5 Akron's innovative scholarship plan is key to securing city's future

NEWS

An Educated Workforce

8 Labor leader and chair of citizens' advisory group share their support of the Akron Scholarship Plan

What's the 3-1-1?

9 The Mayor answers reader questions. In this issue, he responds to concerns about the possible loss of jobs in the city's sewer department.

Akron in the News

14 Akron named All-America City, United Building is hub of city's planned wireless corridor, Akron hosts OHSAA girl's state softball tourney

HISTORY

10 A look back at Akron's long tradition of educational initiatives

THIS IS AKRON

12 The summer's events included Grace Park and Lock 3 art events, LeBron's Bikeathon, Wings Over Akron, Kenmore's centennial, and groundbreaking of a new middle school

MEET CITY HALL

15 Get to know some of the people who make Akron a great city.

Also... Akron's Employees of the Month, February through June.



Akron Neighborhood Events Bring People Together Around City

By Billy Soule

May 24

2nd Annual Neighbors Day

Akron— Launched by Mayor Don Plusquellic in 2007 after seeing it work in European cities, this year's Neighbors Day Akron attracted more than 1,500 people at 70 different sites including private homes, churches, community centers and senior citizen buildings.

On Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, neighbors invited neighbors to get together for food, games and conversation. In every case the message was the same: "Living Together Better."

Members of Akron Praise Temple Church in Kenmore (right) served up hot dogs and soft drinks, and children participated in fun and games.

At a Neighbors Day celebration at Saferstein Towers in West Akron (above), Debbie Sommerville, wife of Akron's City Council president, and daughter Shayla and son Marco Sommerville III, joined seniors at an outdoor picnic on Copley Road.



August 5

Night Out Against Crime

Goodyear Heights— More than 3,500 people attended 10 events across the city to send the message that crime will not be tolerated in their neighborhoods.

City officials offered information relating to crime prevention, health issues and human services at the rallies. Members of PeaceMakers, a youth civic/anti-crime program, handed out flyers alerting young people of the consequences of gun violence.

In Goodyear Heights, over 200 people gathered in front of the Linda Theater (top left) to dedicate a new mural (lower left) created by artist Brian Parsons. The serious subject of crime was tempered with games for children. Neighborhood organizer Sharon Connor, president of R.I.G.H.T., made the evening entertaining with raffles, games, face painting and sno cones while 10th Ward councilwoman Kelli Crawford (left) helped inflate balloons.

To get yard signs, "Crime, Report it, Don't Support" and "We Report All Crimes on Our Block," contact the Community Relations Unit of the Akron Police Department at (330) 375-2390 or the Mayor's Office of Community Relations at (330) 375-2660.

SPECIAL SECTION

Securing Akron's Future

Throughout our country's history, every generation has tried to make a better life for their children and grandchildren.

Early last century, parents and school counselors told students, "get a high school degree and you'll always have a job."

Today, because our world has become more technical as well as more competitive, a high school education is no longer sufficient to compete for the good jobs of the 21st century.

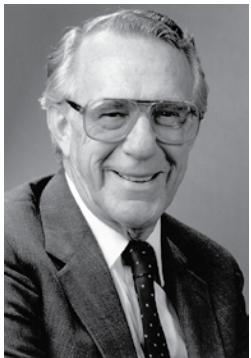
For years, Mayor Don Plusquellic has been discussing how to establish a scholarship program that would assure that every resident graduate of an Akron high school has an opportunity to receive an education that will improve their chances of getting a good job.

On August 18, the Akron City Council placed on the November 4 ballot an amendment to the Akron City Charter that would create an Akron Scholarship Fund.

The need for a scholarship plan is urgent, and we can do it without raising taxes even in these tough economic times.

Our Past Prepares Us

By George Knepper, Ph.D., Akron Historian



For 150 years, Akron has assumed national, and occasionally international leadership in an astonishing array of industrial products. By the late 19th century, industrialists recognized that their increasingly complex operations required a more highly educated work force. A few larger companies developed their own training programs, but increasingly they looked to the public schools and the local college for the skilled people they needed.

The municipal University of Akron provided courses in engineering, commercial subjects, secretarial science, teaching and home economics. Courses were offered at low cost to evening and to part-time students as well as to full-time students.

By the 1930s, University graduates were found everywhere in industrial management positions, in all parts of the civic infrastructure and in the professions.

Akron's need for trained, innovative minds continues to grow.

Basic heavy industries have been transformed into operations demanding more advanced skills. They are joined by complex, knowledge-driven industries, operating in a global economy that requires its key employees to have a high level of competence. All parts of the economy are affected by demand for employees with technical skills that go beyond the self-taught achievements of an earlier time.

Finding ways to assure that local students have access to higher education is imperative to the economic and social health of Akron. It has been done before; it must be done again.

Our future requires new expertise

By Bill Considine, President & CEO, Akron Children's Hospital



We employ more than 11,000 people in our three Akron hospital systems. Children's, Hospital, Summa Hospitals and Akron General Medical Center are always looking for trained, qualified people to enter our workforce, as Health Care becomes one of the largest sources of new jobs in the future.

But for most of the jobs we offer, a high school education is simply no longer enough. That's why I agree with Issue 8. As an employer, as a businessman, as someone who was born here, raised here and went to school here — I know that the Akron Scholarship Plan offers one of the best hopes for

our City's future.

By offering a free education beyond high school to our Akron resident high school graduates, we can equip our young men and women to be prepared for the 21st century, just as our parents and grandparents paved the way for our success today.

Please take time to read the articles in this CITY magazine — and visit the website, www.akronscholarshipplan.com if you have questions.

Your vote for Issue 8 on November 4 is crucial to Akron's continued success.

Related stories on pages 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

Guaranteeing Our Children's Future

The Akron Scholarship Plan

Akron voters are being asked to approve Issue 8 on the November 4 ballot. It will allow Akron to create a community-based scholarship program that will provide funds for Akron resident high school graduates to meet their expenses at an accredited and approved college, university, trade or technical school.

All monies will be managed by the respected Akron Community Foundation.

Scholarships would be awarded as early as 2009 to Akron resident students who are graduates of our public high schools and approved nonprofit schools such as St. Vincent-St. Mary, the Elms and Archbishop Hoban. (Administrators of these parochial schools have agreed that the number of such scholarships would be calculated based on the average number of graduates in recent years.) Home-schooled elementary students would also be eligible.

Scholarships could be used at an accredited and approved college, university, trade or technical school. For example, the funds could be used to acquire a 4-year de-

gree at the University of Akron, a 2-year degree from the Summit (community and technical) College, or to receive certification from an accredited union apprentice program, or from a trade school in Akron.

The amount of the scholarship would cover tuition and fees after the student has applied for other available private or government-funded scholarships available to the student. In this way, the community does not lose the money from available outside sources.

And just as the federal government does with scholarships it awards to some students, there is an expectation of a return on this investment. To that end, students will have a choice to live and work in Akron after graduation and pay nothing back to the program; or, if they live outside the city, to return a small percentage of their earnings — equal to the amount of our income tax — to the scholarship program over a period of 30 years. This will, in most cases, be less burdensome to students than paying off a student loan and also assures the taxpayers of Akron who don't have school-age kids a return on their investment.

The Kalamazoo Promise

By David Budin

The "Akron Plan for the 21st Century" was based in part on The Kalamazoo Promise. Launched in 2005, the program provides full scholarships for all graduates who had received their elementary and secondary schooling in the Kalamazoo Public Schools. The scholarships' amounts are calculated on a sliding scale, ranging from 100 percent for students who have attended Kalamazoo Public Schools from K-12, to 65 percent for 9-12.

The Kalamazoo Promise was developed to stimulate Kalamazoo's economy and bring business and people back to the city. Approximately 1,200 students have taken advantage of the program so far. It has had a positive effect on job growth, home building and school enrollment. Kalamazoo has shown signs of a much-needed rebirth, according to the *Wall Street Journal* of July 28, 2008.

About 400 families from other Michigan communities and 32 states have moved into the Kalamazoo school



Photo courtesy of Radisson Hotel/Loft Apartments - Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated (DK)

district, increasing school enrollment by 12 percent and graduation rates have risen 21 percent.

Major companies, like Kaiser Aluminum Corp., have moved to Kalamazoo and some have built new headquarters there, creating thousands of jobs.

Home building, which had been stagnant in Kalamazoo until the advent of The Promise, has sprung back to life. One home builder hadn't built a home in the Kalamazoo School District in the 12 years before the Promise was announced. Now, home sales in the district account for 20 percent of the company's business.

And the increased focus on education has spilled over into surrounding communities as well. One Kalamazoo neighbor passed a \$119 million bond last year, its largest ever, to build and remodel schools.

What can a program like this do for Akron?

Housing and jobs have grown in Kalamazoo since its scholarship plan was implemented.



Illustration by Frank Cucciarre

Guaranteeing Our Sewer Utility

How a Lease of the Sewer System Would Work

Unlike Kalamazoo, we do not have anonymous donors to fund a scholarship program, so we need an alternative funding mechanism. The value of our sewer system can generate an up-front infusion of cash sufficient to fund the Akron scholarship program well into the future.

Governments in Chicago and Pennsylvania have used the value of their community's long-term investment in assets (such as highways) to raise cash from the private sector for new projects.

Around the country, hundreds of cities' water and sewer services are supplied by private companies. This idea is not novel, nor — with responsible management — does it present an unreasonable risk.

Here's how the lease would work:

Investors — usually large pension funds — would invest in the system to receive stable revenue.

The up-front lease payment, perhaps \$300 million, would pay existing debt on the system with the balance invested permanently in a fund under the reliable control of the Akron Community Foundation, and it could only be used for scholarships.

An operator, hired under an iron-clad lease, would be obligated to hold the line on rate increases to users that would be less than Akron's 30-year average; meet all EPA and government environmental regulations; and operate under controls we would place on it to ensure good service to sewer customers.

If the lease does not work, the city will always have the option to cancel the contract and take the system back.



4.1%

The average annual increase in Akron sewer rates over 30 years has been 4.1%

3.9%

The average annual increase in Akron sewer rates cannot exceed 3.9% over a 10-year average for basic operations and maintenance.

A partial list of the over 1000 communities that have private operators for their public utilities. Some arrangements have been in place for more than 30 years. In 2007, over 92% of contracts for operating public utilities were renewed with the existing vendors, underscoring the success of these arrangements.

| City/Authority | Utility |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Atlanta-Fulton County, GA | Water |
| El Paso County, TX | Water |
| Gary, IN | Sewer |
| Hoboken, NJ | Water |
| Indianapolis, IN | Sewer |
| Los Angeles County, CA | Water |
| Milwaukee, WI | Sewer |
| Oklahoma City, OK | Sewer |
| San Juan Capistrano, CA | Water |
| Seattle, WA | Water |
| Tampa Bay, FL | Water |

When you enter the voting booth in November, this is the ballot language you will see:

ISSUE 8

PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT CITY OF AKRON

A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

Shall the Charter of the City of Akron be amended by the addition of new Section 98 AKRON SCHOLARSHIP PLAN, establishing a Scholarship Fund for Akron resident students, **which shall include the following protections:**

1. The Scholarship Fund shall **only** be used to provide scholarships to resident students who attend an accredited and approved college, university, trade, or technical school and the Fund shall be managed by the Akron Community Foundation;
2. The Director of Public Service will be authorized to enter a lease, and **not a sale**, of the Akron Sewer System and to deposit the net proceeds into the Scholarship Fund;
3. The lease shall **guarantee a cap** on rate increases, and require compliance with all environmental laws and with operating and maintenance standards issued by the City?

ISSUE 8

☐ YES

☐ NO



Issue 8 is Also Good for Young Men and Women Who Are Not College-Bound

By Dave Moran, international representative, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

College is not right for everyone. Upon graduating from high school, many young men and women would prefer to work with their hands, rather than choosing a career path that has them sitting behind a desk.

People with mechanical aptitude who choose to learn a trade such as carpentry, plumbing, working with sheet metal or heavy equipment, or many others, can make a decent living that enables them to buy a home and raise a family.

The Akron Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training program, funded by the National Electrical Contractors Association in partnership with area employers and the IBEW, has reported a graduation rate of more than 90 percent. Completion of the program can provide as many as 50 college credit hours and often prompts trades grads to seek additional training in pursuit of a two-year degree.



Issue 8 would encourage young people to seek their highest potential.

We are working with Akron Public Schools to get graduates interested in apprenticeship after leaving high school. Issue 8 would encourage young people to seek their highest potential. Each year, the IBEW and other building trades graduate hundreds of young people through their training and apprenticeship programs who see the wisdom of having a career, not just a job.

Dave Moran, former business manager of IBEW Local 306 served as President of the Tri-County Building and Construction Trades Council, 2005-2007. He was an IBEW apprentice in 1978, and worked as a union electrician. Dave lives in Firestone Park.

ISSUE 8 IS ENDORSED BY:

Akron Board of Education
Akron Tomorrow
Greater Akron Chamber
Kenmore Board of Trade
Teamsters Local No. 348

Tri-County Building and Construction Trades Council made up of the following members:

Asbestos & Insulation Workers Local 64
Boilermakers Local 744
Bricklayers Local 7
Bldg & Construction Laborers Local 894
Carpenters District Council
Electricians Local 308
Elevator Constructors Local 45
Glaziers Local 1162
Operating Engineers Local 18
Painters and Decorators Local 841
Plasterers and Cement Finishers Local 109
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 219
Roofers, Slate & Tile Local 88
Sheet Metal Workers Local 33
Structural Iron Workers Local 17

Citizens Group Reviewed Scholarship Plan Before It Went to Ballot

By Louise Gissendaner, Chair, Akron Scholarship Plan Advisory Committee, and Akron District President, Fifth Third Bank

A diverse group of citizens who live, work and pay taxes in Akron was appointed by the Mayor in May to review the idea of leasing the sewer system as a way of funding a scholarship plan.

One of the objectives of the advisory group was to ensure that Akron's sewer ratepayers are protected. The committee concluded that, as a community, we can set a new course for the future of Akron's young people while also protecting the customers of our sewer system.

The committee also concluded that the



city needed to retain ownership of the sewer system; and — if and when it is leased — protect against unreasonable rate increases; set firm standards for customer service and operations, including environmental standards; protect jobs for existing employees; and use lease proceeds only to fund the scholarship plan.

We enthusiastically support the Issue 8 proposal.



Members of the Akron Scholarship Plan Advisory Committee

Mark Clark, First Energy
Bill Considine, Children's Hospital
Mark Goldfarb, Saltz Shamis and Goldfarb CPAs
Steve Kasarnich, Carpenter's Union
Jim Hurley, City Council
Holli Mallak, Resident
Malcolm Costa, Community Action Council
John Frank, Retired Former City Councilman
Roy Ray, Retired Former Mayor
Henry Johnson, Henry's Acme
Ilene Shapiro, Summit County Council
Bob Otterman, Senior Advisory Council,
Chair: Louise Gissendaner, Fifth Third Bank



What's the 3-1-1? | Citizens' Q & A with the Mayor



Mayor Don Plusquellic fields questions from concerned residents...

We asked for your questions in our last issue of CITY magazine, and 172 of you returned a postcard to me! We handled every complaint and concern, and in most cases tried to send a personal response to everyone who sent in a card.

We received our largest number of questions about tree branches — when to cut them, how to dispose of them, and what to do about your neighbor's trees.

The City regularly trims trees on its properties: in the parks and on devil strips. Every year, crews regularly are in the neighborhoods trimming low-hanging branches on public property or rights-of-way.

Many residents asked what the City could do about the low-hanging branches over their property from their neighbor's tree. Generally, the City cannot get involved in private disputes, but a rule of thumb is that you're permitted to trim any branches hanging onto your property from a neighboring tree, up to the property line.

Because of the recent bad storm, we have been in an "emergency" situation, and have been picking up any and all logs or branches placed at the curb. Ordinarily throughout the year, our Sanitation crews will pick-up bundles of twigs or branches from trees or shrubbery that are tied in bundles no longer than four-feet in length.

As always, your complaints and concerns will be politely heard and responded to with your call to our 3-1-1 Call Center, or from any phone you may dial 330.375.2311.

Q. *I am concerned that if Issue 8 passes, and the sewer system is turned over to a private operator, that there will be a lot of dedicated Sewer Department employees who may be without jobs. What about them?*

A. I have assured our employees over and over that they will still be employed by the City when voters approve the lease of our sewer system. On September 29, Akron City Council backed up that promise using the strongest voice possible, a city ordinance.

The approximately 100 employees will be assigned to other departments of the city, earn their same hourly pay rate and retain all existing benefits and pension.

Unfortunately, there are those who continually and intentionally mislead our citizens, even though in February, I said publicly that these employees should remain with the City. With this ordinance, there should be no more uncertainty; no more misleading.

Over the years, the public service department experienced a decline in employees due to normal attrition. We have worked hard to provide good service to residents with fewer employees.

The lease of the sewer system would create a pool of roughly 100 skilled workers who would be available to fill the positions that are available due to attrition.

Q. *We need more police patrolling our neighborhood at night. How can we stop the loud music, fireworks, and playing of radios? It is very disturbing.*

A. When Akron Police receive calls about loud music, they do make an effort to impact the problem.

One resident who sent in a postcard received a personal call back from the APD captain who is the shift commander. The resident said he doesn't like to call 9-1-1, but it is important to call the police when these incidents are occurring, and where possible — to target the source of the noise as specifically as you can.

We do send letters to landlords after we have received 3 such calls in a 6-month period regarding a rental property. Our nuisance law gives us new tools to enforce such bad behavior, and there are landlords who have been fined under the law. But first we must document these incidents, which can only occur if neighbors call the police.

It's also true that on a busy Saturday night nuisance calls may be a lower priority, but every call is responded to and recorded. This is also true with regard to barking dogs.

Generally our police enforce complaints where a dog has been barking continually for 20-minutes or more.

If you would like to ask the Mayor a question, send an email to mayor@ci.akron.oh.us or write:
Editor, Akron City Magazine
166 South High Street
Akron, OH 44308

Akron: A City of "Firsts"

The proposal to create a permanent fund that will award scholarships to Akron high school students and be financed through a lease of the city's sewer system has received national attention.

Newspapers from New York to Los Angeles, radio and TV stations have heard about the "new" Akron Plan.

The proposal is newsworthy because it's different from anything assembled by any city government anywhere.

There are other scholarship plans administered for city residents. (See Kalamazoo Promise, page 6.) There are many cities that use private companies to run their public utilities. (See chart, page 7.) And a number of local and state governments have used the up-front lease payments from highways to fund capital projects.

But Akron will be the first to fund a scholarship program with the lease of its sewers.

Akron has been "first" a lot.

- In 1847, wanting a better life for their children, Akron city voters were the first to adopt a graded, unified, free school system, called the "Akron Plan," or what we today call 'public schools.' Previously a typical school in Akron was a one-room log shack open four months of the year taught by one untrained teacher. The new plan assigned trained teachers to grades by an elected school board, supported by a separate system of taxes.
- In 1853, Akron was the first city in the United States to offer a free high school education to students.
- In 1935, Akron was the first place where the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were not only developed, but used successfully as tool for recovery, spurring on the largest self-help organization the world has ever seen.
- During the second World War, Akron was first to create a useable synthetic rubber, an effort that has been called more important to the U.S. victory over the Axis powers than the Manhattan Project (atomic bomb).
- Tubeless car tires were first manufactured by B.F. Goodrich Company in May, 1947.
- In 1994, Akron was the first Ohio city to implement Joint Economic Development Districts to avoid annexation of township land and spur growth of land development and jobs.
- In 2003, Akron was the first city in Ohio to dedicate a portion of its income tax to rebuild or remodel every school building as a Community Learning Center, an alternative to the property tax that no other city had previously used, but which has created interest in numerous Ohio cities ever since.

Akron Changed the

A carpenter, Ansel Miller — the first man to build a two-story frame building in Akron "without the use of whiskey" — proposed a radical idea to his Akron neighbors in 1840: To educate all children at public expense. He was threatened with violence by childless property owners who shuddered at paying for other people's children to go to school!

But the carpenter with a passion for schooling fought back, convinced of the righteousness of his cause.

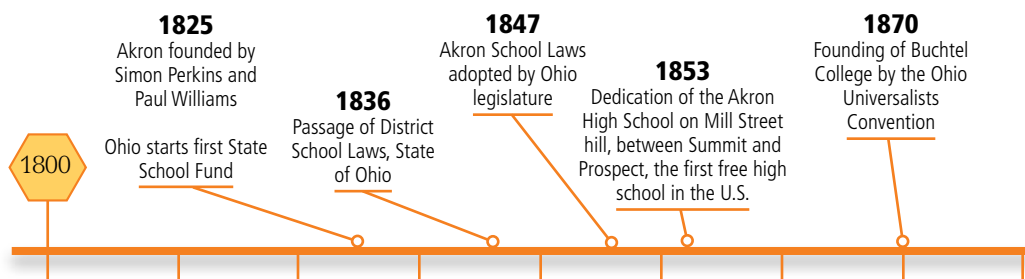
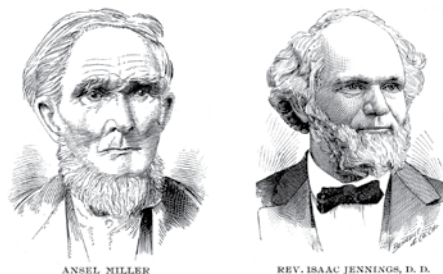
These "Common Schools," the first public elementary schools, received little tax money, if any.

In 1846, Miller was joined by the Yale-educated pastor of the Second Congregational Church, Reverend Isaac Jennings, who chaired a committee that called on Akron to create a new system of schools that would have its own separate governance, its own money, and an enlarged scope of studies. These new schools would be more efficient and provide greater uniformity.

At Akron's inception in 1825, there had been a single one-room frame school building at what is now Broadway and Buchtel Avenue. The Old Stone



This 1909 photo of the Akron High School shows off the 160-foot bell tower with its 16-foot-diameter clock, which dominated the skyline of the day. It was erected in 1886 to meet the growing demands of the city, and was described by historian Samuel Lane as a "monument to the intelligence and enterprise" of the people of Akron. The basement housed the offices of the school board and superintendent.



World of Education Once Before

Schoolhouse would later be built on the site.

Miller, Jennings and other leaders of Akron persuaded the Ohio Legislature to adopt the Akron School Laws in 1847. They provided for an elected school board who would, in turn:

- Receive all monies due the schools
 - Hire teachers, contract for construction of buildings and purchase furniture
 - Set standards for curriculum and criteria for advancement
- Sound familiar?

The Akron school laws of 1847 proved so successful that a year later, the Ohio Legislature extended the option of adopting the Akron School Laws to every city and village in the state. Within a decade, most cities in the U.S. that were developing on the country's frontier adopted the plan for public education invented in Akron by a carpenter and a pastor.

The result of this innovation was to see the intellectual capacity of all of Akron's citizens unleashed in a way new to world history. In one generation, Akron went from an agricultural town to a city that lured the farm machinery industry and created the cereal industry as well.

By 1850, U.S. Census data shows that almost every child in Akron was enrolled in public schools that had the nation's best teachers, the best discipline, the best textbooks and the best buildings.

Akron was also the first city in the U.S. to offer a free high school education to its students. The first Akron High School was built on Mill Street hill between Summit and Prospect, and was dedicated October 13, 1853. Sidney Edgerton, Esq., a member of the school board, delivered congratulatory remarks that included: "upon the advanced position which Akron occupied in the educational world, and the bright future in store for her both from a business as well as an educational standpoint."

The question for Akron of 2008 is whether it can unleash a similar revolution in intellectual accomplishment with the adoption of the Akron Scholarship Plan for the 21st Century.

The Akron High School Class of 1896. A high school diploma was a ticket to job success and prosperity. Twice as many women graduated from high school as men, most of them becoming teachers. A 2-year or 4-year college degree or a trade school certification beyond high school is essential today to earning a living wage.



1886

A new 4-story Akron High School is erected on Forge Street between Union and College Streets

1900

1913

Buchtel College transferred to the city and becomes the Municipal University of Akron

1956

The first Ph.D. program is offered in polymer chemistry at the University of Akron

1964

The 2-year Community & Technical College is established at the University of Akron

1967

The University of Akron becomes a state-assisted university.

2000

2003

Akron voters approve 1/4% income tax addition to fund the \$700 million construction project of Community Learning Centers over 15 years.

2007

Helen Arnold Community Learning Center becomes the first to open as part of the new building program.

This is Akron



« Several thousand art lovers stopped by this year's **University Park Art Fair** at historic Grace Park on the city's east side. This was the third year that the University Park Development Corporation, in collaboration with business and residences in the area, sponsored the Saturday event. Artist Todd Volkmer (left) was among 100 regional artists to display and sell their works.



» Sixty Akron high school Arts Apprentices created works of public art in the 6th annual **Lock 3 Summer Arts Experience**, including a color-drenched mural along the driveway into Canal Park (far right) under the direction of professional artist Cornelius Butler. Other students under the direction of artist Don Parsisson used a computer graphics program (right) to create 3-dimensional sculpture on new bike racks for Northside.



Photo by Ken Love



« Akron's newest hospital is **Select Medical's Specialty Hospital** on East Market Street, a long-term acute-care center that is a partnership with Select, Akron General Medical Center and Summa Health Systems of Akron. (Far left) is developer Mike Wojno, who was joined by (L-R) Alan Bleyer, president & CEO of AGMC; Mayor Don Plusquellic; Tom Strauss, president & CEO of Summa Health System; Kimberly Thomas, CEO of Select Specialty Hospital Akron; and Robert Ortenzio, CEO, Select Medical Corporation.



Photo by Ken Love

As seen through the lens of City photographer Bruce Ford, who has been capturing scenes of Akron for nearly 30 years.



◀ Father's Day weekend marked the return of Akron's popular air show at Fulton airport. **Wings Over Akron** put on two days of high-flying air acrobatics, with help from the Salvation Army. Families were able to get "up close and personal" with historic aircraft, and talk with veterans as well as active military personnel.



▲ Akron's Own Olympic Gold Medalist LeBron James distributed another 300 free bicycles to deserving children at the **2008 King for Kids Bikeathon** in downtown Akron, sponsored by State Farm. The James Family Foundation attracted over a thousand participants to ride the 8-mile course with LeBron and his friends, who just happened to be NBA All-Stars.



◀ Memorial Day weekend began with the dedication of an authentic Civil War tombstone at the grave site of **Hughlin Harrison**, Akron's first Chief of Police in 1897, who is buried at East Akron Cemetery. Unveiling the new white marble Union Army marker were retired police chiefs Edward Irvine (far left); Larry Givens, now Akron's Deputy Mayor for Public Safety (far right); Chief Michael Matulavich; and Akron Police Sergeant Tom Dye (2nd from left), who researched the history of the first chief. Students from Mason Community Learning Center participated in the unveiling.



◀ For the 7th time, **Akron remembered the events of September 11, 2001** with a special memorial service. High Street Christian Church hosted this year's solemn commemoration opened by the combined Akron Police & Fire Honor Guard. About 250 downtown workers joined members of Akron's safety forces and area pastors in remembering those who lost their lives on 9-11 and also those who serve our country in uniform.



◀ Construction is underway at the National Inventors Hall of Fame. **The Center for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Learning** will be a new Akron middle school, which will open in a new addition to the NIHF facility. Joining Mayor Plusquellic at the groundbreaking for the newest jewel in the crown of Community Learning Centers were children from Akron's King School; and (L-R) Bob Reffner, NIHF Board; Bill Considine, Akron Tomorrow; Marco Sommerville, Akron City Council President; Linda Omobien, Akron School Board President; APS Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Small; University of Akron President Dr. Luis Proenza; Maryann Wolowiec, Project Manager; Ken Jones, 5th Ward Akron City Council; and Greater Akron Chamber president Dan Colantone.



▲ **Kenmore** commemorated the **100th anniversary** of its founding with a special Mayor's Press Conference at the Church on the Boulevard, where students from Kenmore High School's art classes displayed logos they had created for the occasion. A 3-day festival was held at Prentiss Park, sponsored by the Kenmore Community Association to top off the celebration.



Akron – An All-America City Again!

The city officially celebrated its selection as an “All-America City” for 2008 at Lock 3 park on the 4th of July. A team of community leaders, neighborhood organizations, City Council representatives and officials unveiled a 40-foot-high banner that was unfurled from the State Street parking deck, and it has remained in place this summer for the 125,000 people who have visited

Lock 3 through October.

Akron is one of 10 cities nationwide to receive the distinction from the National Civic League out of approximately 100 cities that applied for the honor. Akron was one of 16 finalists invited to make formal presentations to a panel of judges in Tampa, Florida at the national meeting of the NLC in June.

United Goes Digital

Akron is the new home of The Knight Center of Digital Excellence, located in the United Building at Main & Market, from which \$25 million over the next five years will be distributed among 26 cities where Akron’s Knight family operated newspapers.

As national headquarters, Akron will be the first community to be funded to show cities how they can take advantage of universal wireless access, which has truly become the digital “Town Square” of the 21st century.

The Akron wireless universal access corridor will initially cover about 12 square miles at a cost of \$2.2 million.

Heading up the project is Akron’s nonprofit partner, One Community, which presently connects nearly 1,000 public and nonprofit institutions via its fiber-optic broadband network – one of the largest and fastest in the world.

The Akron wireless universal access



corridor will initially cover about 12 square miles at a cost of \$2.2 million. In addition to funds from Knight Foundation, the University of Akron will contribute \$350,000, and the city’s initial capital cost will be \$395,000 plus annual operating costs of \$80,000 for each of the next five years.

Wireless internet access will be available throughout the center of the city, where the largest concentration of employees in Summit County is located, some 31,000 workers. The area also includes the Biomedical Corridor and all three hospitals, plus neighborhoods in North Hill, East Akron, Vernon Odom Blvd., and Highland Square.



Photo by Stefank Photography

Softball Tournament

Akron hosted its first-ever Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Girls State Softball Championship at Akron’s landmark Firestone Stadium in June.

The city has been granted a three-year contract to host the tournament, now in its 30th season.

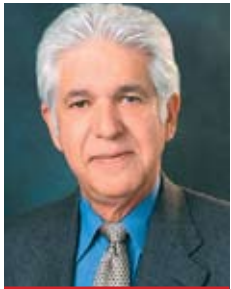
Sixteen teams came from across Ohio to play in four divisions before the Akron crowds.

North Canton Hoover’s Vikings needed 10 innings to eke out a 1-0 victory over Elyria in the Division I championship.



Lt. Jerry Hughes

The 2008 Optimist Club Officer of the Year is **LT. JERRY HUGHES**, a member of the Akron Police Department since 1989. He is the Commander of the Training Bureau where he oversees a staff of 10 that provides instruction to new recruits and conducts in-service training for active duty officers. In commending him for the award, Hughes was described as having “a strong work ethic, unyielding moral and ethical character, and passion for his career.”



Larry Givens

Akron's new Deputy Mayor for Public Safety is former police chief **LARRY GIVENS**, the retired Assistant Sheriff of Summit County. In his new role, Givens is assigned to Sheriff Drew Alexander for up to 18 months, during which time he will work with the police and sheriff departments' leadership to determine how to work more collaboratively.

Akron's Public Utilities Bureau has been singled-out among 300,000 organizations worldwide for its innovative use of the

Geographic Information System (GIS) to improve the quality of life for its residents. Akron uses the computer mapping software to record and distribute data from more than 500,000 separate underground units. **DARREN ROZENEK** of the Bureau helped create the program 10 years ago when the technology was first emerging, and is credited with being the “champion” of the system that is now shared citywide.

Akron's new City Engineer is **RALPH COLETTA**, who has been administrator of the Planning Department's division of Development and Real Estate Services for 10 years. A graduate of St. Vincent High School and the University of Akron, Coletta supervised industrial construction jobs for his family's business for 15 years prior to rejoining the city as a transportation engineer. In 1998, he became the city's principal contact for the acquisition and sale of properties, relocation services and property demolition.



Darren Rozenek



Ralph Coletta

Employees Of The Month

FEBRUARY



OFFICER RICHARD STAMMITT began his career with the Police Department in 1977 as a Patrol Officer and has spent the last 18 years in the Traffic Bureau. He is an APD driving instructor, a member of the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit and he was recently elected chairman of the Traffic Safety Council of Summit County.

MARCH



BUD LUNDSTROM started in 1956 as a Recreation Leader for the City, and retired in 1991

from Akron Public Schools where he taught for 31 years at Central Hower. Bud remained a seasonal Recreation Leader and in 1994 he became a permanent part-time supervisor. His career with the Recreation Bureau spans 52 years. Bud is a member of the Optimist Club, is on the board of Towpath Credit Union, and volunteers for St. Bernard's Church.

APRIL

JERRY WRIGHT has been Master Fire Equipment Mechanic since 1990. He began his career with the City in 1978 as an Equipment Mechanic for Water Pollution Control, and transferred to



the Motor Equipment Bureau in 1980. Jerry is responsible for building maintenance at the department's 13 fire stations and maintenance facility, and repairs equipment at those locations. He makes onsite repairs to all fire and EMS apparatus, helping to reduce downtime by keeping the vehicles in their respective districts and more readily available to respond to emergencies. Jerry stays busy with woodworking in his home workshop and is also an avid bowler, recently rolling his first 300 game.

MAY

MICHELLE SIMON is responsible for doing weekly and monthly leave accruals for vacation, sick and paid leave, and handles temporary



class changes in the Personnel Division. She began her career in 1983 with the City and was promoted to Secretary 1 in the Personnel Department in 1984. She was promoted to Clerk Typist II on June 2, 1993, Secretary II on October 14, 1994 and Personnel Aide on February 2, 2001. She has been married to Gary for 12 years, has six cats and enjoys going to Florida and California.

JUNE

GUIDO SFERRA has been the Stone Mason in the Highway Maintenance Division since 1996. He began his career with the City as a seasonal worker in Water Pol-



lution Control, and was later hired on a permanent basis as a Utility Worker at the Treatment Plant (Kent). Guido has saved the City thousands of dollars in labor and materials by having designed and developed concrete stamping tools that enable Highway Maintenance to make repairs to brick streets that are much less labor intensive. Guido was born in Italy, married in Buenos Aires, Argentina and came to the United States in 1980. He and his wife of 37 years, Rosalia, have raised four children and have three grandsons.

EverGreen Zone in Full Bloom in Akron

Akron was chosen to be one of the first "EverGreen Zones" for a national education program that is based in Minnesota. Project EverGreen chose the All-America City to set the bar for 20 more cities across the country to raise public awareness about the benefits of expanding, preserving and maintaining green spaces that positively impact climate change and create economic, environmental and lifestyle benefits.

Mayor Plusquellic proclaimed May as "Project EverGreen Month," challenging the city to improve home lawns/landscapes, community spaces, commercial areas, golf courses, sports fields and other green spaces. (Akronites may recognize the Gesundheit billboards and bus signs made possible by partnerships with Clear Channel Outdoor and Akron's transit system Metro.)

In August, the culmination of the

program was a massive renovation of a blighted area behind Canal Park and Lock 3. The newly designed green space will serve as home to bocce courts, cornhole and many other fun activities. About 300 volunteers from the JCC Maccabi Games worked on the renovation as a community service project.

Professional landscapers volunteered to plant trees and flowerbeds, and created sitting areas for people to enjoy. The project was generously led by Ric Haury of Suncrest Gardens, and thousands of dollars of products and services were donated by Drake Landscaping, Edenscape, Impact Landscaping, Outdoor Concepts Landscape Contracting, RB Stout, R.G. Thomas Landscape, Vizmeg Landscape, Inc., and Weed Man.

Visit www.project-evergreen.com/akron, for more information and to get tips on making your landscapes even more beautiful.



With the assistance of professional landscapers who volunteered their time and materials, Lock 3 behind Canal Park received a real facelift in an abandoned area that was severely blighted.



Participants in the Maccabi games sponsored by the Jewish Community Center spent a day in August painting the pillars under the State Street bridge to decorate new space along the Towpath behind Lock 3.

Akron City Magazine was made possible through the generosity of these caring sponsors...



Keep Akron Beautiful
850 East Market Street
Akron, Ohio 44305-2424

Presort
Standard
US Postage
PAID
Permit #566
Akron, OH

